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ABSTRACT

After commenting on the increasing interest being shown in educational accountability, the speaker focuses on two questions--with the varied opinions about accountability, is it possible to establish an acceptable meaning of the term, and what are the steps in the process for implementing a model for accountability? Accountability is defined as a "logical and systematic method for collecting information of educational growth of pupils K-12 (or any target area thereof) so that educators may retain, redo, or eliminate educational programs being taught." The steps for the model are 1) start small, 2) identify faculty and organization, 3) list concerns of target area, 4) conduct needs assessment, 5) agree on goals of quality education, 6) state hypotheses, 7) determine product evaluation, 8) determine collection and analysis technique, 9) determine program for target area, 10) construct program objectives for target area, 11) construct instructional objectives for the target program, and 12) identify acceptable baseline criteria for evaluation of instructional objectives. Two of these steps--goals for quality education, and instructional objectives--are examined in detail. Other topics considered are learning responsibility, teaching accountability, using behavioral objectives in teacher-made tests, and sources, criteria, and components of behavioral objectives. (MBM)

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SPEAKER: Dr. Raymond Bernabei, Ass't. Executive Director, Bucks Co. Public Schools

TOPIC: INSTRUCTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

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INTRODUCTION

There have been many proposals to improve the quality of education. Most seek improvement through indirect means. These proposals try to improve classroom teaching and learning by changing and manipulating content, schedule arrangements, class size and the physical plant facilities. All of these are predicated on the assumption that each would increase the technical competence of teachers, which in turn, would improve pupil learnings. While these concepts continue to be in the forefront, a new generation of educational thought is now taking hold--"accountability."

The Question, "Who is responsible for What?" Becomes the basic issue in many places. This issue promises to become more widespread as court decisions related to community control, negotiations, and urban-suburban redistricting are made.

As each decision is made, accountability will develop into a more meaningful issue. This will be due to greater numbers of the population focusing attention on the value of a formal education as it relates to the above controversies. Fewer and fewer individuals and groups will remain idle or willingly finance schools, salaries and practices which do not provide some measure of evidence regarding competence and effectiveness. The basic idea conveys the meaning that educators operating schools should be held responsible for what children "learn" or "do not learn." Responsibility, in this sense, implies accountability. One assumes, then, that reponsibility measures, once described and implemented in a precise manner, will, in fact, improve the quality of education. This very proposition is really what makes accountability an attractive idea and remains the focal point of departure for all discussions.

Failure to educate all students, along with academic retardation of many seems to be the central issue germane to the concept, "accountability." some would say accountability has always existed "in some form or another" in education. Others have determined accountabiltiy can be achieved only via performance contracting, the voucher plan, or merit pay.

Accountability seems to be taking on like an educational rorschach. It seems to be spreading in all directions. Many are talking about it; many are expounding its virtues. There is little doubt of its importance. Yet, much confusion exists among the perceptions held by educators. There seemingly are a variety of viewpoints on the concept. What now remains is whether or not these points of view can be implemented in a school system. Based upon my work with classroom teachers and administrators in the public schools in operationalizing accountability, several questions have evolved. Because of time, I shall focus precisely on two:

FIRST, with the varied opinions about accountability, is it possible to establish an acceptable meaning of the term? That is, acceptable to the teacher and administrator?

SECOND, What are the steps in the process for implementing a model for accountability?

MEANING OF ACCOUNTABILITY

For out intents and purposes, the meaning of accountability is "a logical and systematic method for collecting information of educational growth of pupils k-12, (or any target area thereof) so that educators may retain, redo, or eliminate educational programs being taught." To implement this concept, there must be:

(1) A commitment by the board of education, superintendent, his assistant in charge of instruction and the professional staff;

(2) Participation and involvement of the professional staff in the decision- making process, and

(3) Capability of staff to generate a self-sufficient model for feedback information.

One of the most effective means to facilitate the concept of accountability is by involving the classroom teacher, pupil, and parent.

MODEL FOR ACCOU TABILITY

The following plan or model is suggested for those practitioners interested in starting an accountability program for quality education.

STEPS I: START SMALL

II: IDENTIFY FACILITY AND ORGANIZATION
Identify the facility and organization by zeroing in on a target area for study.

III: LIST CONCERNS OF TARGET AREA
Examine things the way they are as compared to the way they should be.

IV: CONDUCT NEEDS ASSESSMENT
Convert your concerns into learner needs; List the need in concept form; indicate how the need was determined; describe the need in general statement form.

V: AGREE ON GOALS OF QUALITY EDUCATION
Identify and list the goals to be attained. These goals must describe behaviors indicating desired changes.

VI: STATE HYPOTHESES
List some statements of beliefs that, whatever you intend to improve, it will serve as a checkpoint demonstrating success or failure.

VII: DETERMINE PRODUCT EVALUATION
A comprehensive product evaluation program should go beyond testing for skills, facts and knowledge of the cognitive domain. It should enter into the affective and perceptual motor behaviors as well. Identify the methods and devices to test the hypotheses for each goal.

Then list the instruments acceptable as the criteria for measuring the end-product.

VIII: DETERMINE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE
Identify who will do and when the product evaluation (testing) will be done. In addition, describe the method which will be used to analyze the data.

IX: DETERMINE PROGRAM FOR TARGET AREA
Translating how the goals will be put into operation is programming. It is here that the educator must decide what subject area is best suited to meet the concerns, needs, and goals for the pupils in the target facility and organization.

X: CONSTRUCT PROGRAM OBJECTIVES FOR TARGET AREA
Program objectives are written descriptions of expected results through performance of a particular activity or series of events or tasks. Program objectives are sometimes considered as terminal behaviors of students after a long period of instruction.

XI: CONSTRUCT INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES FOR THE TARGET PROGRAM.
When a teacher prepares statements of objectives for a course he will teach, he is, in reality, communicating his educational intents. Stating an educational intent as an instructional objective has its beginning with identifying behavioral objectives. These statements can then be used as a guide for the instructional process, as well as, to develop test items in evaluating pupil progress.

A great deal of in-service training is needed here.

XII: IDENTIFY ACCEPTABLE BASELINE CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES
Devise performance criterion test items for each related behavioral objective. These items will serve as process evaluation and feedback information in monitoring the instructional program.

While certain aspects of models may be inherently good, or inherently bad, it is the operationalizing effect the model has upon its users which seems to be most important.

Since each step of the model I have presented is explained in the packet, ACCOUNTABILITY. I would like to spend the remaining portion of my time on two very important steps related to accountablity:

"GOALS OF QUALITY EDUCATION" AND INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES."

GOALS OF QUALITY EDUCATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In 1963, the General Assembly of Pennsylvania passed Act 299 which contains provisions for development of evaluation procedures designed to measure objectively the adequacy and efficiency of the Educational Programs offered by the Public Schools of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. To carry out the purpose of this act, the state board of education appointed a committee who in turn

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requested education testing service of Princeton, New Jersey, to develop a plan for the implementation of section 290.1 of Act 299.

Education Testing Service recommended in their report ten goals of quality Education for Pennsylvania which were adopted by the state Board of Education in 1965.

In recent years there has been an increased interest in goal definition in education. Most efforts toward the establishment and definition of goals seem to take the form of generalizations or descriptive statements. Little, if any, data is available concerning empirical methods for defining educational goals.

Until recently, the "Goals for Quality Education ", were not defined in a coherent form. An analysis of this problem revealed that most stated goals have little exact meaning for the practicing educator. Frequently, goals are stated in such general terms that any educator could convince himself that these goals are the purpose that guide his program. Goals are statements of general educational intents. While it is not absolutely necessary for goals to be stated in performance terms, the more clearly these statements are described, the more readily we can develop valid indicators of pupil behavior.

The first step in constructing an instruction program centers upon the need for a set of objectives. An objective refers to the performance or change in behavior a pupil is to exhibit upon completion of instruction. Therefore, meaningful objectives should relate to the "Goals for Quality Education." If one is "to measure objectively the adequacy and efficiency" of educational programs, these objectives must be described in terms of not what the schools do, but in what children do. One must itemize the kinds of behavior that add up to the goals for quality education if we are ever to know how children progress toward the goals or how efficient an educational program may be in furthering such progress. Specifying goals in this way poses practical problems.*

The formulation and adoption of Pennsylvania's goals of quality education represents a major step toward the definition of the state's educatio nal intents, making possible an assessment of its efforts toward the fulfillment of those intents. In an effort to further increase the utility of the goals to the practitioner and evaluator, the quality education program study was proposed to review, define, and clarify the ten goals. This study was coordinated and directed by the division of curriculum and instruction, Bucks County Public Schools Intermediate Unit Office. Queps made a unique departure from the usual "Armchair Philosophy" or Logical approach to goal definition by deciding to employ the critical incident technique. This technique was used to collect empirical data to define the goals.

*Educational Testing Service. A Plan for Evaluating the Quality of Educational Programs in Pennsylvania. Volume One : The Basic Program. Princeton, New Jersey: Ets, Henry S. Dyer, Project Director, Chapter I, Pages 1-4 (June 30, 1965).

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In addition the quality education program study includes information concerning the identification and selection of test instruments for assessing pupil development with regard to each of the ten goals of quality education.

Since goals are statements of educational intent with idealistic ends, one presumes that whatever is taught relates to a goal of education. Experience and evidence of classroom teaching idicate otherwise. It is when teachers spell out "What it is that they are attempting to do with children in the teaching=learning process" that statements of accountable ends evolve. Basic to this is writing specific objectives related to each of the goals of quality education.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Behavorial objective writing seeks to improve instruction by raising the performance level of teachers. This presumes that the instructional role of the teacher is indispensable to significant improvement in the learning process. Therefore, behavorial objective writing is designed for and directed to teachers. While behavorial objective writing is intended to increase instructional competence, it does not relieve teachers from the responsibility to assess student needs and to prescribe objectives that are relevant, timely and meaningful.

Specifically, behavorial objective writing is proposed to provide new and different perspectives about teacher accountability. It provides ways to relate assessment of student learnings to explicity stated objectives that are measurable. The distinction between writing behavioral objectives, and knowing something about behavioral objectives as a body of knowledge is basic to instructional competence.

As a methodological tool, behavioral objective writing identifies the teacher's role in setting forth learning objectives. In prescribing objectives for a group or for an individual student, the teacher in effect says, "as a result of my instruction, students will be able to ..."

In this way, behavioral objective writing makes evident that whatever it is that students are to learn is a function of objectives prescribed by the teacher. Objectives prescribed in this way are likely to establish goal clarity or goal visibility for student and teacher alike. Furthermore, it shifts student energies in the direction of learning and away from "Psyching Out" teachers. It also shifts instructional responsibility toward the teacher and away from the student.

LEARNING RESPONSIBILITY

Behavioral objective writing affects at least two aspects of instruction which need attention. One is the problem of teacher attitude as it relates to indentifying who is or is not responsible for learning success in the school and classroom. The other is the problem of determining and measuring instructional performance. In practice, it is generally assumed that responsibility for learning rests with the learner rather than with the teacher. Educational folklore suggests differently. But, careful observations and experiences indicate teachers generally claim credit for successful learnings while abstaining from or shifting responsibility whenever learnings fail or are in doubt.

This is not surprising. Furthermore, it is not meant as criticism of teachers. It is however, an accurate discription of educational reality. But more important, such practices can only exist in social systems like education. These systems lack formal mechanisms and procedures necessary to using feedback data for modification , change, and improvement.

Educational reality shows classroom practitioners also lack the measurable criteria and techniques needed to provide valid and reliable assessm ents about learning and teaching. This does not mean lack of student measurement and evaluation in cla ssrooms. To the contrary, schools offer more than ample evidence of efforts to a ssess students in instructional settings. Numerous efforts to a ssess students occur in the absence of predetermined, identifiable, and measurable learning objectives.

Through the years, the assumption persists that because teachers teach, students learn. But, unless the teaching-learning process makes specific provision (1) to identify and prescribe what it is that is to be learned; and then undertakes (2) To measure and determine these learnings--the explanations which justify success or failures in school will continue to be ambiguous, contradictory, and indeterminant.

TEACHING ACCOUNTABILITY

Until recently, much of the potential and limitation in behavioral objective work was seen in terms of learner outcomes. Perhaps this was to be expected since the term objectives, measurable or unmeasurable, filled well the tradition of looking upon educational progress in terms of student outcomes. Persistent work with objectives now indicates a different and perhaps a more powerful use in behavioral objective writing. That potential is in promoting instructional accountability.

In many places, instructional accountability is already an emotion-laden issue. It promises to become more intense as controversies involving school decentralization, teacher-board confrontations, and skyrocketing education costs gain momentum. Instructional a ccountability is basic to all of the above issues. It is only a ma tter of time before these and similar questions are stripped of the facade which disguises the real controversy. Eventually, a ttempted and achieved student learnings will be related to instructional efforts. When that occurs, Teacher Accountability will be established. The teachers who identify and prescribe measurable learning objectives for students offer tangible evidence of ac countabilty for themselves and their work.

USING BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES IN TEACHER-MADE TESTS

Educational practitioners often find themselves wondering whether to use self-c onstructed tests or to rely upon commercial tests. Cla ssroom teachers recognize also that while their own tests actually may be more valid in terms of measuring learnings taught in class, these instruments lack technical refinements associated with commercial tests. Furthermore, when standardized tests are used to measure learnings for a particular class, it is argued that there is some risk in teaching for "the test." It is our feeling that with out exceptions, few teachers consciously and deliberately teach "the Tests" A more realistic view is to recognize that man teachers dislike using standardized tests. They dislike them because many are based upon learnings that have little relevance to learnings achieved in given schools and classrooms.

W hat we are also saying is that learning objectives for particular schools and groups of children can produce teacher-made tests which are very different from learnings reflected in commercial tests. Yet, in teacher-made tests and in standardized tests, the basic consideration is the same. That consideration is: Does the test measure objectives of learning prescribed and attempted for a given g roup of children?

If teachers taught so that they first stipulated the measurable or behavioral objectives to be learned, then one of two courses of action is likely to follow. Either, a relevant standardized test must be found, or a teacher-made test devised which measures those particular objectives. The question of teaching for "the test" now becomes insignificant.

There are at least two important considerations to note when relating behavioral objective writing to classroom tests. One is a consideration for Instructional Sequence. That is, does teaching begin with measurable objectives from which tests are constructed, or does one teach without identifying the learning objectives to be achieved? The issue of using teacher-made tests or standardized tests now is of secondary importance. What is truly important now is that whichever test is used, it must measure objectives prescribed and attempted with a given group of learners. Tests, like behavioral objective writing, are only means to ends. They are Instructional Tools and Devices Useful to Helping Children Learn.

The relevance of any achievement test is determined by the nature of classroom learnings. In the absence of measurable learning objectives, content or subject matter represents the basic ingredient used to formulate test and test items.

SOURCES OF BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

The sources of behavioral objectives are broad, underlying factors teachers take into account when identifying student learning objectives. However, sources are unlike criteria and components used to write behavioral objectives. Sources represent great variability whereas criteria and components are usually fixed and stable.

Another distinction is that sources constitute external or "outside" factors used to write behavioral objectives, while criteria and components are integral internal qualities that are "inside" factors useful to behavioral objective writing.

Typically, sources of behavioral objective writing include such considerations as, (1) The nature and needs of learners, (2) The nature and needs of society and of the community to which learnings relate, and (3) The structure and nature of the subject or content to be learned.

Instruction based on behavioral objectives begins by considering how well and to what extent these sources are reflected in the objectives prescribed for students. This is clearly a function of teaching. This suggests then, that instructional competence is another "outside" source of behavioral objectives and one in which widespread differences exist. How teachers perceive themselves and their students, and how teachers use knowledge about content and about society, serve as the basis from which behavioral objectives are prescribed and written.

CRITERIA FOR BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

Earlier work in behavioral objectives has been very important to education. These efforts have helped identify and recognize objectives that are behavioral because of specified criteria. Among these criteria, are those which require objectives to be stated in language describing the terminal behavior desired and to specify minimum levels of acceptable performance.

These criteria are vital to behavioral objective writing. But instructional practices are such that these two criteria cannot be generalized and applied to all cases of objective writing. Descriptions of terminal behaviors desired and specifying minimum levels of acceptable performance rely upon the performance level of teachers to effectively use sources of behavioral objectives.

COMPONENTS OF BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

Now, it is possible to give consideration to a number of other factors essential to writing behavioral objectives. These factors are called components. Consideration for "What" to learn identifies the knowledge domains (cognitive, affective, psychomotor) as the first component essential to behavioral objective writing. Concern for "How" to learn identifies the second essential component. This second component is the mental operation necessary to learning the behavior desired and specified in an objective. Consideration for mental operations present in learning objectives reveals the third component essential to behavioral objective writing, that of time. The knowledge domains reveal mental operations and corresponding language that clearly indicate varying intervals of time for designated leqrnings or objectives.

As mental operations and time intervals are verbalized into statements of objectives, language, especially in the form of action verbs, becomes apparent as the fourth component essential to behavioral objective writing.

It should be pointed out that two components, time intervals and language, reveal variabilities and limitations that truly show the importance of the teacher's role in writing and using objectives to improve student learning. If individual differences are to be accounted for through instructional practices then the objectives we write and use must also reflect this variability.

Using the four components, knowledge domains, mental processes time intervals. and language, writers of behavioral objectives now can exercise analytical precision to writing measurable objectives.

It is really instructional competence that determines the consideration to be used and the extent to which these influence the behavioral objectives one writes. For this reason, writing behavioral objectives is classed as a methodological development. The explicit intent of behavioral objective writing is to increase the competence and performance of teachers.

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